

What is claimed is:

1. A method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space, the method comprising:
 - 5 expressing an world position for each of the plurality of objects, where the object position defines the location of the object within the virtual space;
 - listing object metadata for each of the plurality of objects, where the object metadata characterizes detail information about each of the plurality of objects.
2. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, wherein the step of expressing a world position comprises expressing an x-coordinate and a z-coordinate of the object on the map.
3. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, wherein the step of listing object metadata comprises listing how much graphical material each of the plurality of objects contains.
4. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, wherein the step of listing object metadata comprises listing a title for each of the plurality of objects.
5. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, wherein the step of listing object metadata comprises listing a description for each of the plurality of objects.
- 20 6. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, wherein the step of listing object metadata comprises listing a page count of the number of pages contained within each of the plurality of objects.

7. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, wherein the step of listing object metadata comprises listing a out-links count of the number of links pointing away from each of the plurality of objects.

8. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, 5 wherein the step of listing object metadata comprises listing a in-links count of the number of links pointing to each of the plurality of objects.

9. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, wherein the step of listing object metadata comprises listing a rating for each of the plurality of objects.

10. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, wherein the step of listing object metadata comprises listing a logo for a company associated to each of the plurality of objects.

11. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, wherein the step of listing object metadata comprises listing contact information for a company associated to each of the plurality of objects.

12. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, wherein the step of listing object metadata comprises listing an industry SIC code for a company associated to each of the plurality of objects.

13. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, 20 wherein the step of listing object metadata comprises listing a trading symbol for a company associated to each of the plurality of objects.

14. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, further comprising:

designating at least one category for the map, where the step of designating comprises:

25 listing category metadata for each of the categories, where the category metadata discloses detail information about each of the categories; and

defining a category bounds on the map for each of the categories.

15. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 14, wherein the step of defining a category bounds comprises defining an x-coordinate, a z-coordinate, a width-coordinate, and a height-coordinate for the category.

5 16. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 14, wherein the step of listing a category metadata comprises listing a category identifier.

17. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 14, wherein the step of listing a category metadata comprises listing a depth identifier for describing a hierarchical depth of the category.

10 18. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 1, further comprising:

defining a map bounds, for describing what portion of the virtual space is shown by the map; and

listing map metadata, for describing detail characteristics of the map.

15 19. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 18, wherein the step of expressing a map bounds comprises defining an x-coordinate, a z-coordinate, a width-coordinate, and a height-coordinate for the map.

20 20. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 18, wherein the step of listing a category metadata comprises listing a maximum page count corresponding to the highest number of pages for any of the objects.

21. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 18, wherein the step of listing a category metadata comprises listing a maximum out-links corresponding to the highest number of links pointing away from any of the objects.

22. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 18, wherein the step of listing a category metadata comprises listing a maximum in-links corresponding to the highest number of links pointing to any of the objects.

5 23. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 18, wherein the step of listing a category metadata comprises listing a maximum rating for any of the objects.

10 24. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 18, wherein the step of listing a category metadata comprises listing a metadata range, where the metadata range is the minimum value of the metadata or the maximum value of the metadata for any of the objects.

15 25. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from any one of the previous claims, wherein the plurality of objects are URLs.

26. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from any one of the previous claims, wherein XML protocol is used to describe the plurality of objects in the map of the virtual space.

27. The method for describing a plurality of objects in a map of a virtual space from claim 26, wherein XML namespaces are used to enable extension of XML protocol.